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ART I.—*Die Kirchengeschichte des 18 und 19 Jahrhunderts, aus dem Standpunkte des evangelischen Protestantismus betrachtet, in einer Reihe von Vorlesungen, von Dr. K. R. Hagenbach.* Leipzig. 8vo. Vol. I. 1848. pp. 511. Vol. II. 1849. pp. 467.

OTHER works of Dr. Hagenbach have made him sufficiently known as a writer of comprehensive views and unusual sprightliness. This, rather than what the Germans love to call depth, is at the bottom of his popularity. Yet he is decidedly a German; looking on the world's history and the world's geography as finding their central region in central Europe; but with a kindly, liberal, and even all-embracing welcome to the rest of the earth. Without being a Hegelian, or even in all details a follower of Schleiermacher, he shows both in nomenclature and opinion the influence of the modern philosophy. Without being one of the churchly orthodox, or anything like a Puritan, he has a warm side towards pietism, and even goes to insular Great Britain, to seek and applaud what is good in Methodists. So far as sentiment, feeling and philanthropy are extant in evangelical religion, he gives it his hand, and is

ART. VI.—*The General Assembly.*

The General Assembly of our Church met, agreeably to appointment, in the Central Church in Cincinnati, May 16, 1850. The Rev. Nicholas Murray, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly preached the opening sermon from Ephesians v. 25–27. The Rev. A. W. Leland, D.D., of South Carolina, was elected Moderator, and Rev. W. W. Eells, of Newburyport, Mass. was chosen temporary Clerk.

Memorial to Congress.

The Rev. Dr. R. I. Breckinridge moved on the morning of Friday May 17th, that a committee be appointed to prepare a memorial to Congress expressing the views of the Assembly and of Presbyterians generally respecting the preservation of the National Union and the Federal Constitution.

“Dr. Breckinridge said that he presumed there could be no dissenting opinion here or in the United States, that such a movement is timely and proper. Ordinarily it is doubtless best that the Church of Christ should keep as far as possible from all the political agitations of the day, but great crises may arise when the danger is so imminent and so much is at stake, that it would be criminal neglect of duty for the Church to withhold the expression of its opinion and wishes. Such a crisis is now impending. It is not certain that it can be averted. If it does come, and the result so much to be deplored is accomplished, it would be the greatest calamity that could befall this country, and God’s people, next to the extirpation of the Christian religion from the earth.

“Our Church occupies a peculiar position: extending into almost every State, and stretching over the whole country; embracing slaveholders and non-slaveholders; yet it has remained united; while other churches have failed to maintain the Union, we have succeeded. We are therefore in a position to say decidedly that the Union may be preserved. What we have done for one hundred and fifty years, may be done hereafter. Let us not dictate, but respectfully express our opinion that this great calamity which may be averted, ought to

be averted, and that we look to Congress and to God to avert it.

The subject was made the order of the day for Monday next, at three o'clock.

In the afternoon, however, the vote to make this subject the order of the day for Monday, was reconsidered and Dr. Breckinridge's resolution was called up. Its adoption was opposed by Dr. Spencer, Messrs. Hervey, Dickey, Reynolds, Barber, and Indge Fine. The last mentioned gentleman moved the indefinite postponement of the subject. The principal grounds of opposition insisted upon were, first that the Union was in no real danger, and secondly, that it was inexpedient for church courts to meddle with politics. The resolution was advocated by its mover and Mr. Mosely, on the ground that the Union is in real danger, and that the Church was bound to exert its influence in averting so great a calamity as the disruption of the states. The motion for postponement prevailed, yeas 103, nays 79.

Church Music.

The committee previously appointed on this subject reported that unforeseen circumstances had delayed the publication of the book of church music which had been reported to the last Assembly. After some debate the committee was continued with powers.

Cheap Religious Newspaper.

A committee on this subject had been appointed by the last Assembly, from which two reports were presented, one in favour, and the other in opposition to the establishment of such a paper. We have actually expressed our opinion as adverse to the plan of the Assembly attempting to provide a paper to be under its control and patronage. A desire to gratify those who were in favour of the scheme, and the conviction that its public discussion would tend to settle the mind of the church on the subject, induced us to insert in a recent number of this Journal an elaborate paper from one of the most prominent advocates of the measure. Our own convictions of the impolicy and impracticability of any such enterprise have been

strengthened by reading the debates in the Assembly; and having as an act of courtesy presented to our readers in a former number, all that could be said in its favour, we think it proper to devote the few pages at our command on this topic to a statement of the leading objections to it, as they were urged on the Assembly. Some of these objections are given in a condensed form in the report presented by the Rev. Dr. Lord, of Philadelphia, which we insert in full. Dr. Lord said he concurred in the views of the majority of committee in opposition to the establishment of such a paper:

“1. Because he believes the measure pecuniarily impracticable, unless the proposed paper shall be also cheap in respects far more essential than the price of subscription, that all calculations founded on the presumption of obtaining forty thousand subscribers, and their undeviating prepayment, so as to avoid all loss, are, if plausible, deceptive, and would be proved so by experience.

“2. Because he is entirely opposed to taxing the church at large, as the friends of the measure propose, for the establishment of such a paper, as it would unnecessarily multiply collections, and interfere with the success of those which are absolutely necessary to carry forward efficiently the Institutions of the church, while it is probable, that one half the sum which it is contemplated thus to raise, would be sufficient to supply the really poor with any one of the local papers now established.

“3. Because he believes that religious newspapers can be best sustained by private enterprise, and that to interfere with such enterprise by an attempt at centralization in a colossal church establishment, would be unpopular, anti-republican, injurious to individuals and dangerous to the church itself. If successful in breaking down such enterprise, it would become dangerous to the church, by having thus removed the various sentinels which now stand and watch on the walls of our Zion.

“4. Because he is convinced that the idea and practice of cheapness may be carried too far, that its moral effect on the church may prove injurious, that there are too many ready to avail themselves of the Assembly's sanction of the principle

to carry it out in its application to other matters besides a weekly paper; and that, in the end, this cheapness falls heavily on the labouring classes. Capitalists and employers are not first nor chiefly affected by the reduction of prices. They can save themselves, at least to some extent, by a corresponding reduction of wages. The real and oppressive operation of the thing is on those who do the work. It grinds the face of the poor. And the evils of this cheap system are already becoming great, in our country. The church should have nothing to do with it, except to condemn it. That benevolence which lives by exactions on the bones and sinews of the poor, is a heaven provoking enormity.

“5. Because the proposed measure involves great if not insuperable practical difficulties of this kind,—such as would arise in the choice of a competent editor, the embarrassment to which he would be subject in pursuing an impartial and independent course, while constrained by his position to speak for all, when at the same time there must and will be among them diversity of sentiment; the constant and often unpleasant discussions which a review of his course would occasion in the Assembly, year after year, engendering strife instead of harmony.

“6. Because the Assembly itself would be placed by the proposed measure in an improper and wrong position.

“First, by being liable in law, or in honour, for such pecuniary deficiencies or obligations as the want of sufficient patronage or the occurrence of reverses which no sagacity can always guard against might originate; and,

“Second, by being really responsible for the character of the paper, whilst its actual control over it could be only infrequent and imperfect.

“Such is the mere outline of the reasons, stated not argued, in view of which the undersigned feels himself constrained to concur in the report of the majority.”

To this we subjoin an outline of the remarks of the Rev. Dr. Hoge, who said,

“1. He believed that the experiment of establishing a newspaper for the church would prove to be a failure. It would meet with such decided opposition from all other papers now

in existence, that it would be unable to get such a circulation as would be necessary to ensure its support.

“2. Such a paper with the seal and impress of the Assembly, is undesirable in itself. Here would be the one paper as the organ of the church, and the others avowedly in opposition to the Assembly. The peace and unity of the church would be thus destroyed, and perhaps the disruption of the church would be the result.

“3. The operation of the church paper would be dangerous to the order and purity of the church. It may be beautiful in theory, but we are old enough to know that theories, however beautiful and dazzling, may be worthy of the severest condemnation. However much may be said of the supervision to be exercised we may be sure that it will be made the organ of a party. What would have been its power for evil twelve or fifteen years ago? and who knows but there may arise, and soon, another state of things, rendering it equally dangerous and disastrous? I am no prophet, but I venture to say, in ten years a party will arise that might destroy that organ.

“4. It is impracticable to sustain such a paper. There is not such a unity of mind and binding together of opinion in our church as to make such a paper successful. It is a free church; freedom of mind and thought is characteristic of our church: and the press must be free. You cannot place it under restrictions, without destroying its utility. It is said we may as well control the newspaper, as books and tracts. But there is an essential difference. These boards are to express opinions on specific subjects. The contrary is true of the periodical press. It must have freedom to put forth its opinions on all subjects, at all times. Otherwise it ceases to be valuable, and becomes decidedly mischievous.

“5. Leaving out of view the idea of establishing *one* paper, and taking that of exercising control over all Presbyterian papers, I have only to say, that it would be vexatious and troublesome, fettering the mind of the church, and in the end would be intolerable. I think the church exercises as much control now as is desirable. If the ministers and members do not like the way a paper is conducted, they may stop its circulation among them. This is control enough.

“6. Differing from some brethren, I do allege that our religious newspapers are at too high a price to come within the means of a large part of our families. True they might deny themselves some luxuries and take a paper. But this we cannot expect them to do. And I do know families who cannot find the means to pay for a paper at three dollars a year. If you would have these papers widely circulated, you must put them at a price that will bring them within the means of the people.”

Judging from the course of the debate the prevailing sentiment of the Assembly seemed to be very generally and strongly against the proposed plan. In a spirit of concession, however, the following resolutions were finally adopted.

Resolved, That while the General Assembly is at present unprepared to take any step towards the establishment of a religious paper or papers designed for more general circulation, especially to meet the wants of families living in the remoter sections of the church, and enjoying the means of grace only in a limited degree, still it does regard such a work as full of momentous results, and worthy of the most serious and prayerful consideration.

Resolved, That the whole subject be recommended to the careful consideration of the churches, and that a committee be appointed to make it a matter of further investigation and inquiry, and report the results to the next General Assembly. Resolutions adopted.

Under this resolution, the following committee was appointed:

Rev. Dr. McGill, Rev. Mr. Barber, Rev. Dr. J. W. Alexander, Rev. Dr. W. L. Breckinridge, and Mr. J. D. Thorpe. to which were added, on motion, Rev. Mr. Hamill and Rev. Dr. McKinley.

Foreign Missions.

The committee on this subject made the following report which was adopted.

The committee to whom was referred the Report of the Board of Foreign Missions, submit to the Assembly the follow-

ing statement and propositions, as to the results of their examination of that important and impressive document.

“The General Assembly recognize with a deep sense of gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, the marked tokens of His special favour on this good and great work during the past year. Our Missionaries have been protected in the midst of great perils—the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday. On one of our stations, the Spirit of God has been poured out in special effusions, and the hearts of our Missionaries greatly encouraged in beholding the work of the Lord prospering in their hand. We have manifest evidence of an increase of interest amongst our people in this work. For these indications of the care of our Heavenly Father, and his benediction on the cause committed to our care, we desire to feel the obligations we are under to thank God, and to engage with increased zeal and energy in furthering the work. In accordance with the facts and statements above alluded to, we recommend the adoption of the following resolutions :

“1. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly call the special attention of the members and elders of the churches to the pressing want of additional labourers among the Indian tribes; and they would express their earnest hope, that during the year this want may be fully supplied.

2. “*Resolved*, That the Assembly view with satisfaction the commencement of a system of thorough education for the youth of Liberia. And they hereby direct the Board to proceed as fast as means may be afforded in the erection of suitable College buildings, and in the endowments of Professorships and Scholarships, in sufficient numbers to meet the growing wants of this infant Republic ; and for this purpose the Board are hereby authorised to open a separate account for such donations in aid of this object as may be made by the friends of education in Liberia.

“3. *Resolved*, That the Assembly record their thanksgiving to God for his blessing upon the labours of our brethren in the great Missionary fields of India, Siam, and China ; and they would earnestly exhort the churches to sustain these important missions by enlarged donations, and especially by

earnest and importunate prayer for the presence and helping of the Holy Spirit, without which all human agency will be in vain.

“4. *Resolved*, That the present condition and wants of Papal Europe demand the increased attention and exertions of the Board, and that the Assembly call the attention of the Churches to this most interesting field and urge them to more prayer and effort, and that the already weakened power of the Man of Sin be utterly destroyed, and his followers be brought into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God. And the Assembly would urge upon the Churches, that their donations for this purpose be made through their own Board, as the most economical and appropriate mode of communication with our Evangelical brethren in Europe.

“5. *Resolved*, That Missions among the Jews have a peculiar claim upon the prayers and patronage of God’s people.

“6. *Resolved*, That the report of the Board be approved and referred to the Executive Committee for publication.”

The Hon. Walter Lowrie, Secretary of the Board, made a very interesting statement as to its operations and prospects. He first presented the condition of the Indian tribes, among whom the missions of the Board are established. There are but two objects that can induce men to go among these people: to make money or to do good, and it was found that the men whom the Government sent among them to educate them, were very unsuitable men to promote their spiritual welfare. To carry on missions among them, a large number of laymen are wanted, of suitable spirit to go there. Five tribes have been offered to us as fields of our labour, on this side of the Rocky Mountains, as well as on the other, and we can do nothing for them for want of suitable men and women to supply them. The means are furnished, and what we now want is the men to go. Africa, Western Africa, is now a field of great interest and importance. The missions are no longer experimental. In Liberia, they are aiding in laying the foundation of an educational system of permanent influence. They want a system to train not only a native ministry, but physicians and teachers for that field. We have an excellent school with fifty to seventy scholars taught by one of the

elders there. We are greatly in need of teachers for that mission. A young man educated for the ministry, had recently offered to go there as a teacher, and a man in the South had offered to give \$500, a year, for five years, to promote education in Liberia.

The missions in other parts of the country, were also exhibited, and it was greatly encouraging to hear of the prospects of usefulness in that part of the world.

Northern India.—Five young men are now ready to go to this field. Fifteen native students are in process of training for the ministry, and in a short time, the force will be doubled. Four printing presses are at work sending off ten millions of pages every year. The Secretary entered into and gave a most pathetic and impressive picture of heathenism there, especially the degradation of the female sex, and the influence of the example of social intercourse of the missionary and his wife upon the native population. He also discussed the propriety of missionaries returning home, and showed that when a man loses his health, it is, in all its aspects, desirable for the cause at home and abroad, that he should come back.

Siam.—It is a day of small things here, but an immense population is to be brought under the power of the gospel. We only need to extend our operations there to reach the most extensive system of superstition in the world.

China.—The mission here needs immediate enlargement, and the means to give the people the printed page should be greatly increased, he showed the wonderful results to be anticipated from the speedy communication now opening with China by the way of California.

Mr. Lowrie closed his statement, which was listened to with deep interest, by referring to Papal Europe, and showed the encouraging signs of the times in that field. He remarked that there was a strong tendency toward Presbyterianism among the reformed churches there, and he handed a letter to the Stated Clerk to read, from Brussels, showing the great encouragement there is, to prosecute our labours there, and gratitude for what has already been done.

Mr. Lowrie said we have a perfect organization to send money to Europe, and promote this work; but there is an-

other society that is aiming to do the same work, in the same field, and comes into our churches to solicit funds for its support. This produces confusion, and takes from our treasury a large amount of means that we should receive, and could most usefully employ. Some of our most respected brethren have taken decided grounds against the admission of these agents.

The Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge offered a resolution additional to those now before the Assembly, on foreign missions, requiring that an additional number of pages be set apart, in the Home and Foreign Record, for the Foreign Missionary Board.

The last Assembly had appointed a committee which had established a monthly periodical for all the Boards, and five pages only are allotted to the circulation of intelligence from our wide missionary field. It is not enough. The Board has far less facility and space for diffusing intelligence than formerly, and instead of diminishing she ought to enlarge her means of spreading the knowledge of her operations among the churches.

Dr. Van Rensselaer said that the committee of the last Assembly had not yet reported, and until the Assembly heard from it, no action ought to be had on this resolution. A contract had been made by which one private enterprise had been given up, and the Record for the church had been established, each Board agreeing to a certain number of pages for its own use in the paper. It would be unjust, he said, to the other Boards to order the enlargement of the space allotted to one, while the rest were restricted.

After some further conversation the subject was postponed. This is a complicated question. Two things however we presume will be generally admitted. First that the space at the command of the Foreign Board is altogether inadequate; and secondly, that from the nature of their operations it is not necessary or desirable that the Boards should be on an equality in this respect. It is evident, for example, that the Board of Foreign Missions must have far more to spread before the church, than the Board of Publication. At the same time, the additional space required by the former can hardly be

granted to it in the pages of the Record without injustice and injury to the other Boards. We understand the proposition of Dr. Breekinridge was modified so as to allow each of the Boards, at their discretion, to enlarge the space in the pages of the Record.

Domestic Missions.

The Rev. Mr. Happersett read the annual report of the Board of Missions of which the following is an abstract :

“Number of Missionaries, 570, who have laboured in twenty-five States, and in California and Oregon, and Minnesota. Additions on examination, 2500 ; Certificate, more than 2000 ; Churches organized, 60 ; Church edifices built, 140 ; Forty thousand children in Sabbath Schools. A large number of Bibles and tracts and books of the Board of Publication have been distributed. These Missionary churches have contributed about \$10,000 for Foreign and Domestic Missions. Encouraging reports of the observance of the Sabbath, and also the cause of Temperance, have been received. In California a Presbytery has been formed, and two churches organized, and the houses of worship sent out to the brethren there.”

The committee to whom this document was referred subsequently submitted the following report :

The Committee to whom was referred the Report of the Board of Missions have attended to that service, and have examined the document presented with all the accompanying papers, and are highly gratified to find, in the details, ample evidence of the steady onward progress of this very important instrumentality for advancing the cause of true religion throughout the wide extent of this growing country, and while they do not institute any improper comparison between one form of benevolent operation and another, but would bid them all God speed, yet they cannot refrain from saying that the cause of missions in our land is productive of great good, and ought to find a response in every heart. After such consideration as we have been enabled to give the subject, your Committee would respectfully submit to the Assembly, for their action, the following resolutions :

1. *Resolved*, That the report be adopted and published under the direction of the Board.

2. *Resolved*, That, in view of the widely extending operations of the Board, and the constantly increasing need of funds, it be earnestly recommended to all the churches to make new and strenuous efforts to enlarge their pecuniary contributions, in aid of all the objects contemplated by the Board; a duty that we are greatly encouraged to press upon the churches, from the fact stated in the report, that during the past year much more has been received into the Treasury from *church collections* than in former years.

3. *Resolved*, That the wants of California, Oregon, and other new parts of our wide spread territory, as brought before us in the report of the Board, joined with the good which we have reason to believe may be effected in those portions of the country, are such as to demand the special regard of our Church, and fully justify the Board in the large expenditures which they have thought it proper to make.

4. *Resolved*, That the efforts of the Board of Missions to benefit the many thousands of foreign population who are cast upon our shores, is worthy of all praise, and should be commended to the churches for their countenance and support.

5. *Resolved*, That, in looking at the results of the labours of the year, and considering that *five hundred* ministers have been sustained, either in whole or in part, while preaching the gospel in the more destitute parts of our land; that *sixty* new churches have been *organized*, more than 140 houses of worship built, and at least 2500 persons brought into the churches by profession, a large portion of whom we have reason to believe, were hopefully converted during the year, together with the encouragement felt by our missionaries while labouring among the coloured population at the South; when these results are considered, surely the people of God should lift up their hearts in gratitude to Him, and take courage for all coming time.

And whereas, It is understood that Dr. Wm. A. McDowell, who has for many years filled the office of Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Missions, has resigned that office, the Assembly cannot let this opportunity pass without bearing

testimony to the fidelity, diligence and wisdom with which he has conducted the affairs of the Board, and assure him that he carries with him into his retirement the full confidence of this Assembly in him, as well as their prayers for his happiness in his declining years.

It appears an overture had been presented, praying the Assembly to take action on the subject of giving greater efficiency to the Board of Missions, to enable it to keep up with the rapid extension of the population of our country. The committee of bills and overtures recommend the adoption of the following resolution on this subject, which was agreed to, viz :

Resolved, That a committee of nine selected from different portions of the church, be appointed to consider this matter, and report to this Assembly.

The following gentlemen were appointed on this committee, James Hoge, D. D., N. Murray, D. D., J. C. Spencer, D. D., A. W. Mitchell, M. D., N. L. Rice, D. D., W. L. Breckinridge, D. D., S. S. Davis, D. D., R. Nall. Dr. Hoge, the chairman of this committee, subsequently submitted the following report :

The committee to whom was referred the subject of devising a method of giving greater extent and efficacy to the operations of the Board of Missions, have considered it carefully and earnestly, and propose to the Assembly the following views and measures for their consideration :

“A great work, which is important to the Church and the country, in a degree that is not easily estimated, has already been performed by the Board of Missions. During the time that has elapsed since its organization, many Congregations and Sabbath Schools have been established, the Gospel has been preached to great multitudes, many destitutions have been supplied, very many souls been brought to the Saviour, and the Church has been greatly edified by this instrumentality. The whole amount of good which has been accomplished in this way for the welfare of the Church and the glory of God, can be known only in eternity. And yet there seems to have been the beginning, instead of the completion of the work of giving the full ministrations of the gospel to that portion of the population which falls to our share. With proprie-

ty, then, we may inquire,—How shall we more fully do this work? In answer to the inquiry, it is proposed that the Assembly shall make the following arrangements:

I. The Board of Missions shall hereafter consist of members; and this number shall be appointed by this Assembly; one-third of whom shall serve one year, one-third two years, and one-third three years; and after the present appointments, one-third of the number shall be appointed by each General Assembly. Of the whole number, one-half shall be Ministers and one-half Lay-members of the Church.

It shall be their duty to be present at all meetings of the Board; shall be necessary to form a quorum; and their travelling expenses, if any are incurred, shall be paid out of the general funds.

They shall have power to elect their own officers, as heretofore, except the Secretaries: to make all rules and by-laws which may be necessary; to fill vacancies in their body, and in the office of Secretary, until the next Assembly shall have filled such vacancies; and they shall in general have the management and control of the whole work of Missions and Church extension in the United States.

II. There shall be two co-ordinate Secretaries, whose particular duties shall be defined, and the performance of them shall be directed and supervised, and their compensation shall be determined by the Board.

The Secretaries shall be elected by the General Assembly, and they shall hold their office during the pleasure of the Assembly. But a Secretary may, for urgent reasons, be suspended from his office by the Board, until the next meeting of the Assembly.

III. As it is deemed highly necessary that the several Synods shall be fully engaged in Domestic Missions, it is also proposed that the Assembly consider these further arrangements:

1. That it be enjoined upon each Synod, at its next annual meeting, to elect a Committee on Missions, with a Secretary, or Agent, (whose salary shall be fixed by the Synod,) who shall be charged with the whole subject of Missions within the bounds of Synod.

2. That each Synod shall, at its annual meeting, draw up

an estimate of the probable amount of the contributions of its Churches for the year next ensuing, and a statement of the number of Missionaries needed within its bounds, and shall forward the same, as soon as practicable, after said meeting, to the Assembly's Board.

3. That the Board shall, at the earliest day practicable after the above statements are received, meet and determine the number of Missionaries to be allowed each Synod, with the aggregate compensation, of which notice shall be immediately given to the Synodical committees, who shall thereupon nominate the Missionaries and name the salary for each to the Board, in order that commissions may issue.

4. That it is hereby enjoined upon every Church in connection with this body, to take up annually a collection for this object; and the Synods are charged with the oversight of this injunction. The collections to be paid over to the Synodical Secretaries, and by them deposited within the bounds of the Synods respectively, subject to the drafts of the Treasurer of the Assembly's Board.

JAMES HOGE,

Chairman of the Committee.

We sincerely rejoice in this decisive expression of the opinion of the Assembly against such innovations. Organic changes, except in cases of real emergency, are great evils, and therefore should be very rarely resorted to. Our Boards have answered well. They are highly conservative bodies. They prevent the concentration of power in a few hands. If they are either abolished or rendered inefficient every thing is thrown under the control of a small executive committee. To such committee it might be very pleasant, at times, to be perfectly independent, except so far as a nominal responsibility to the Assembly is concerned. We say nominal responsibility, for it can scarcely be more. The Assembly is too large a body, sits too short a time, and has too much to do, to allow of its exercising, in ordinary matters, a real controlling supervision over executive officers. It is the ultimate court of appeal in great cases. But the Board can be called at any time, can prolong its sessions, can concentrate its attention, and in a manner really effective inspect, the action of the executive committee. This is a great security, and a great relief to the

committees themselves. It throws the responsibility from some six or eight on a body of sixty or eighty drawn from every part of the church. It is true the attendance on the meetings of the Board is not always large; but it is generally a body several times more numerous than its executive committee; and cases of real difficulty, can hardly fail to secure an adequate attendance. On many occasions the healthful action of the Board in modifying or revising that of the committee has been gratefully acknowledged by the executive officers themselves. It is not organic changes we want. Executive ability is all that it is necessary to make the Boards, with their present organization, answer all the ends of their appointment. This is shown not only in the great enlargement of the operations of the Board of Missions under the long and faithful administration of its late secretary, Dr. William McDowell, but in the ease with which the new department of church extension was engrafted on the other operations of that Board. If they are blessed in securing the services of a man of efficiency and of true constructive intellect, we doubt not the church will see the Board of Missions expand itself into proportions adequate to the growth of the country, and the great subject of ministerial support thoroughly discussed and satisfactorily disposed of.

Board of Education.

The Committee to whom the report of the Board of Education was referred made the following report which was adopted, viz :

“The committee to whom was referred the Thirty-first Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church (1850) beg leave to state to the Assembly that upon the examination of the Report, they find it to consist of three departments or sections.

“1. Some very appropriate and highly valuable remarks upon the general importance and bearing of the educational operations of the Presbyterian Church, embodied in the first fourteen pages of the manuscript portion of the Report.

“2. The second division comprises the notice or history of the educational operations of the Board during the past year,

and completes the manuscript portion of the Report, which exhibits a progress truly encouraging, and calls for gratitude on the part of the Church to her Great and Divine Head. This progress is cheerily demonstrated by the growing prosperity of both branches of the important work intrusted to this Board by the Assembly, viz: The superintendence of the ministry, and the fostering care of seminaries or institutions of learning from the primary school, where the elements of a scriptural morality and sound theology are inculcated, to the Theological Hall, from whose disciplinary appliances the student is ushered upon his field of labour. The Report exhibits an increase in the number of candidates over that of the preceding year, and an advancing prosperity in the schools, academies, and colleges within the oversight of the Presbyterian Church. But while your committee recognize in the operations of the Board a highly adequate ability, fidelity, and vigilance, on the part of the official agencies on whom its highly important trusts are devolved, they cannot but regret the apparent want of an interest on the part of the great body of the Church in this department of the grand field of her moral and spiritual enterprise commensurate with the issues to be wrought out. The cause of missions, so dear to the Church, is in an important sense dependant upon the onward progress of the cause of ministerial education. It is here within the limits of this department of the Church's hal-
lowed enterprise that the foundation is laid, and the susceptibilities elicited, and the appliances put in requisition for the qualification of an instrumentality by which the Home and Foreign field of Missionary enterprise is to be cultivated, replenished, and adorned, and to be indifferent to this fountain from which such streams are expected to flow, appears to your committee an inconsistency, for which, as a Church, we cannot too severely inculcate ourselves, so long as the present apathy continues to exist in the congregations generally, throughout our borders. Your committee therefore hope that the members of this General Assembly, in returning to their respective fields of labour, may endeavour to hold up prominently before the views of their congregations the claims which

this cause is worthy of maintaining in their prayers and sympathies and contributions.

“3. The third division of the report is embodied in a printed circular or pamphlet, entitled ‘Suggestions towards improving the plans of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America;’ and contains some very valuable hints and suggestions concerning the modification and expansion of the present plans of the Board’s operations.

“As expressive of the sense of this Assembly upon the entire report, your committee beg leave to offer the following resolutions :

“1. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly, believing Christian education in all its departments to be connected with the preservation of the best interests of the Church and State, cherish a high sense of the importance of the measures of their Board of Education, whose aim is to secure the religious instruction of our youth in schools, academies and colleges, and to assist candidates for the ministry in their preparation for the sacred office.

“2. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly record their gratitude to God for the general prosperity which has attended the operation of the Board during the past year, as indicated in the increase of candidates for the ministry, and in the increase of schools, academies and colleges, under the supervision of the Presbyterian church.

“3. *Resolved*, That the third division of the Annual Report, embodied in the printed pamphlet entitled ‘Suggestions towards improving the plans of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,’ be commended to the consideration of the next General Assembly thereby affording to the Presbyteries more ample opportunity to examine the views it contains, and enabling the Board to digest a system of rules and regulations in conformity to the changes proposed and illustrative of the practical working of their plans according to their contemplated modification.

“In behalf and by order of the Committee.

“JOHN A. SAVAGE, *Chairman*.

When the report of the Board was presented to the Assem-

bly, the Rev. Dr. Baker moved its adoption and made a series of instructive and interesting remarks in relation to Texas, the field of his labours, especially in reference to the interests of education in that extensive and important state. He stated that most other denominations had taken precedence of the Presbyterians in Texas in this matter; but that the Presbytery of Brazos had made arrangements for founding a college at Huntsville. A very favourable charter had been obtained from the legislature of the state, and eight thousand dollars, in addition to an eligible site for the college-building, had been subscribed by the inhabitants of the town. This is a very important and promising enterprise, which must commend itself to the best wishes and co-operation of Presbyterians in every part of the country. Dr. Baker we understand is devoting himself with his characteristic energy to soliciting funds for the establishment of this college. We trust he may meet with abundant success.

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, said, "he did not expect to have an opportunity to say anything on this Report, when it might hereafter be brought up, and must say a word now. He was disposed generally to allow the gentlemen at the head of the Boards to shape their general action. They might be supposed to be better acquainted with the requirements of the case, and they were held accountable. For no secretary had he more respect than for the secretary of the Board of Education; but when great principles were brought in question, he felt bound to express his mind, under any circumstances. The Boards are all our own, and to be loved; but he did not agree with his father, that because one of them must have a ginger-cake, all must have the same.

"A great change in the Board of Education was now proposed. Originally this Board was designed to select poor and indigent young men of fair promise, and superintend their education for the ministry. If it is proposed that the Presbyterian Church take up the whole subject of education, or education of all Presbyterian children, or all academical or college education, he objected to it. If this were to be done, it would not be best to do it through this Board, designed for the training of poor and pious young men for the ministry,—

a Board located, too, in one corner of the Church. If this is to be done by the Church, it must be done much more largely than as a collateral matter of this Board of Education.

“Again, he thought the General Assembly ought to consider well before they determined that we ought, as a church, to embark in the matter of universal education. We ought to be cautious how we gave countenance to this principle. In his judgment, if there was a calamity which could befall the Presbyterian church and the country, of a temporal or ecclesiastical nature, it would be that the whole knowledge, power and prudence of the entire Presbyterian Church should be abstracted and kept by itself. Moreover, the amount of money, time and labour required by the new suggestions of this Report for a general system of parochial high schools, &c., would require an amount of money, time and labour, which would be much better expended in another way. Millions and millions of money, and efforts no man can calculate, will be necessary to accomplish an object which, if it were accomplished, had perhaps better be undone.

“He had carefully examined the system of parochial schools, in other countries, and ventured to say, that no such system as was here proposed had ever existed any where. In Scotland, the system was connected with the union of Church and State, and, in proportion as that tie was weakened, were the Scotch people abandoning the parochial school system, and, if we go on as desired, by the time they have gotten off their old shoes, we will have put them on. But he was not now discussing the question, and would proceed no further.

“The first two resolutions were then adopted, and on the fourth which refers to the new plans of the Board,—

“Rev. Dr. Hoge said: He would prefer that this part of the Report be referred back to the Board of Education, with instructions to them to report fully on the proposed changes to the next General Assembly, and made a motion to this effect.

“Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer said, this report was not intended to commit this Assembly. The report already went much into detail as to the plan proposed. He was willing it should be referred back to the Board.

“Rev. Dr. Hoge wished the Board to state specifically

what amount of means and money would be required to carry out this plan. He had read this part of the report somewhat carefully. He thought the plan, as presented, was rather theoretical than practical.

“Dr. Hoge’s resolution to refer the matter back to the Board was then carried.”

We regret that the able secretary of the Board had not the opportunity of unfolding before the Assembly and the church the modifications which he has proposed, and the principles on which those modifications rest. The matter is of so much importance that every opportunity should be embraced of bringing it prominently forward. It is perhaps well that some delay should occur in the adoption of the suggestions of the report by the General Assembly; but it is a pity the subject was not discussed. It appears from the printed pamphlet accompanying the Report, that the proposed modifications have reference mainly to the following points. 1st. The mode of giving assistance to those under the care of the Board. 2d. The conditions on which that assistance is to be given, and 3d. The class of persons to be thus aided.

As to the first of these points the true principle undoubtedly is that those who devote themselves to the service of the church are entitled to a support from the church. This is but one application of the more general principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire. The application of this principle to the case of those who preach the gospel is universally recognized. It is however no less applicable to those who are preparing for that work. They give themselves up to the service of the church. If already prepared, she receives and sustains them. If they are able to prepare themselves at their own expense, very well. If not, the church is bound to give them at her expense the necessary training. Every civilized state acts on this principle. Youth are every where trained for the service of the state at public expense, for all those branches of the public service for which special professional training is necessary. Youth are placed in military schools to be educated for the army, or on board of national vessels to be qualified for the navy. And almost every church, in every age, has had its schools for training young men for the ministry free of all

expense to themselves. It is wrong therefore to regard those who are thus educated by the church for her own service, as recipients of alms. This unhappily is done at least to a certain extent, and is injurious in its influence both on the church and the candidates for the ministry. For some reason a distinction is made between receiving the avails of a scholarship and being on the funds of the Board. The former is not felt to be a degradation; the latter is in a measure regarded as a painful dependance. We see no substantial reason for this distinction, but as it is actually made not only by the young men, but also by others, it is wise in the Board to change the form of their benefactions, and instead of doing as is now done, allowing those under their care so much a year, establish scholarships in our various seminaries, colleges, and academies. It is not of course intended to make permanent foundations, the interest of which is to support the incumbent, but simply to give a new form to the annual appropriation. The incumbent will be regarded as a bursar in a college; or a recipient of the income of a scholarship in a seminary. No objection can be made to this, and if it changes the aspect under which the appropriation is viewed, it will be a decided and great advantage.

There is one feature of this part of the plan, however, with regard to which we feel some difficulty. It is proposed that these scholarships "shall be bestowed upon candidates as awards of merit." We do not see how this principle is to be carried out. If there were a limited number of scholarships in a college or seminary, for which there were numerous candidates, then we could understand how a selection of the most promising of these candidates could be made, and scholarships granted them as rewards for previous diligence and good conduct. But we presume that the Board propose to give every young man who leaves the academy a scholarship in a college, and every graduate of a college a scholarship in a seminary, provided these applicants are not deemed unfit for further support. The scholarships therefore will be given not to a certain number of distinguished candidates, but to all who pass muster; i. e., to all who are not dismissed for incompetency or bad conduct. If this is the case, they cease to be

“awards of merit;” any more than the allowance granted the cadets at West Point, or the salaries of our pastors. It is indeed proposed on page 5, of the “Suggestions,” that “a few premiums in the form of larger scholarships, or of fellowships in each of our Theological Seminaries,” should be offered. This as far as it went would meet the objection above stated; but of course only to a limited extent. It would be only these “larger scholarships” which would have this character of “awards of merit.”

There is another difficulty as to this point. We do not see who are to act as judges of the respective merit of the candidates. Our candidates do not all come under the cognizance of the same body of examiners. They are scattered over the whole of the church. A young man may be superior to the few with whom he is compared in one place, and thus adjudged worthy of an “award of merit;” though inferior to many in other places, with whom he cannot be compared. This difficulty would indeed be avoided by assuming a fixed standard by which to judge, and not take simply the best of those who offer. The actual operation of the plan however would require the latter mode, the comparative estimate of all the applicants; and we do not see how this can be made.

Besides this, what is meant by merit? and how is it to be estimated? It would be easy to judge of the comparative scholarship and talents of a number of candidates; but this is only one, and not the most important, form of excellence in a candidate for the ministry. Piety, temper, prudence, and energy are not to be left out of view. It might well happen that the best scholar would not be the most promising man. The merit of moral excellence and temper though so important, can not be determined by a board of examiners—and therefore every thing on this plan would be apt to turn on literary proficiency. Besides we question very much the propriety of introducing the principle of emulation among theological students. We throw out these reflections for the consideration of those concerned, not in the way of opposition to the plan, which in its essential features we heartily approve.

The second modification proposed relates to the condition on which aid is to be given to those under the care of the Board.

At present assistance is rendered only on condition that the recipient pledge himself to enter the ministry, or to refund the money expended on his education. It is proposed to do away with this pledge. It is urged that it is manifestly improper to exact of a boy just entering an academy the pledge, that after some eight or ten years he will become a minister. He is too young to know his own mind intelligently; he can have no adequate apprehension of his gifts for the sacred office; we cannot tell whether he can conscientiously, after such a term of years, regard himself as called of God to take on himself the work of a minister. He is placed in a false position in being required to decide this momentous question at the very commencement of his literary course. When the time comes for him really to ponder it, he finds it already decided; and he cannot reverse that decision without a loss of character and a heavy pecuniary penalty. This is undoubtedly wrong. The church has no right to place her children under such temptations to enter the sacred office, uncalled of God. Another objection to the pledge is that it commits the church as well as the candidate. The church assumes that the youth who applies for assistance on entering the academy, is a proper subject to be regarded as a candidate for the ministry. She so considers him. He is recorded as such in the minutes of the presbytery or of the Board. He is so reported to the General Assembly. How manifestly unwise is it thus to determine this question before his talents, his disposition, his piety have been or can be subjected to any adequate test. This premature judgment has often to be revoked. "Almost all the failures of the Board of Education have occurred in the academical and collegiate courses." The church is either pained and her organs brought into disrepute by the failure of those prominently held up as suitable candidates for the ministry; or she is constrained, contrary to her better judgment, to introduce into the sacred office unsuitable men simply because she has committed herself, and has had them so many years under training. It is evident that we should have much greater security by rejecting all such premature engagements on either side. Let it not be decided that a man is to be a candidate for the ministry, until he is prepared to enter on

his professional studies. Then he may know himself, and be known to the church.

These and other considerations of equal weight are urged by the Secretary of the Board with great force for the abolition of the pledge. We fully concur in this view of the subject. We have for years regarded this feature of our educational operations with growing disapprobation, and we greatly rejoice that from the right quarter a movement has been made to get rid of this unsightly and galling chain. Dr. Van Rensselaar states that out of sixty replies received "from the friends of education in every presbytery of the church," all but one were in favour of abolishing the pledge in the preliminary course, and that one "only expressed a doubt." We think the pledge therefore is as good as dead. Hundreds of liberated consciences and untrammelled hands will thank the worthy secretary for their deliverance.

The third modification proposed relates to the class of persons to be educated. Hitherto the assistance of the Board has been confined to poor and pious young men preparing for the sacred ministry. It is proposed, in the first place, not to restrict the Board any longer to aiding candidates for the ministry. Pious young men, whatever may be their views as to their future profession, will be eligible to the proposed scholarships in academies and colleges. This almost necessarily follows from the abolition of the pledge. That abolition supposes the incumbent to be left free to act on his own sense of duty as to what profession he shall choose when he has completed his collegiate course. Many therefore, it is to be presumed and desired, who have been educated by the church, will enter her service as teachers, physicians, lawyers, merchants, and agriculturalists. The church will gain much by this addition to her educated children. But in the second place, it is proposed that a profession of personal religion shall not, in all cases, be insisted upon as essential to eligibility to an academical or collegiate scholarship. It will be permitted to the Board to receive promising youth of good moral character, and give them the advantages of a liberal education. Can this be objected to? Would not every man rejoice if it were in the power of the church, as it ought to be, to offer to every

one of her youth the advantages of such a training? Is not such an education a great blessing and a great talent? Does not experience teach that a large part of the conversions among the young take place during the time they are in the academy or in college? And would it not greatly multiply the resources of the church, increase her strength in educated men, and enlarge her field of choice for ministers and teachers to have the number of those to whom a liberal education is accessible, increased? Many who now object to the education scheme because designed only for ministers, will be likely to co-operate cheerfully in this enlarged scheme of benevolence; while those who prefer that their contributions should be confined to the education of ministers, can of course, be gratified.

The great objection to this scheme is its expense. Where is the money to come from to educate not only the ministers, and teachers of the church, but all who would be glad to get the advantage of a liberal education. This difficulty is not so formidable as it appears. In the first place, the Board commits itself to nothing. It only undertakes to appropriate what the church confides to its care for the purpose of education. The expenditure must be limited by the supplies. And we can see no objection to allowing those who are willing to give, to contribute their money for general educational purposes. This indeed has already received the sanction of the Assembly in authorizing the Board to aid in sustaining colleges and academies, the benefits of which are extended to all classes. A second limitation to profuse expenditure is to be found in the consideration, that it is not every pious young man, much less every merely morally correct applicant for assistance that the Board proposes to receive. They will doubtlessly use the funds committed to their care discreetly. Aiding first those who have the ministry in view; then those who in addition to promising talents have the recommendation of hopeful piety; leaving, so to speak, only the surplus of their funds and moneys specially appropriated for the purpose, to be employed in the education of youth of superior gifts who make no profession of religion.

So far from feeling objection to this proposed enlargement

of the operations of the Board, we think the church is under great obligations to its Secretary for the expansion he has already given to its operations, and for the still larger principles and plans which he has now brought forward. It is by expansive schemes alone that we can keep up with the spirit of the times, and, as our Scottish brethren would say, can overtake the work God has given us to do.

Board of Publication.

“The Rev. Dr. Leyburn, Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Publication, read their annual report, which gave an encouraging view of the operations of the Board during the year. The following is an abstract of said report :

During the year ending March 31st, 1850, the Board of Publication have added to their Catalogue twenty-five new works. The total number of books and tracts issued during the year is 383,500, being an increase of 121,750 over last year's issue. Receipts during the year from donations and sales of books, \$57,238 40. The circulation for the year has exceeded by nearly fifty per cent. that of the previous year.

The number of colporteurs employed during the ecclesiastical year ending March 31st, sixty-three ; about twenty have since been added to that number. The fields of these colporteurs are in seventeen different States.

The entire cost of the new buildings of the Board was \$20,291 47, which has been paid.

Dr. Leyburn said, in conclusion, that the Board was constantly called to come into contact with other voluntary associations, which were doing the same work ; and he urged the Assembly to take some action that would secure the contributions of our own churches to our own board. The Board of Publication ought either to be abandoned, or supported vigorously. It is often discouraged, when it sends out agents, to find the churches turning a cold shoulder to it, and preferring other associations of a similar character. This Board ought to be placed on an equal footing with the other Boards of the church. It was sometimes urged that it had an endowment to begin with ; but so had the Tract Society ; and yet the latter was constantly receiving large collections from the churches.

The Rev. Mr. White of Virginia, and the Rev. W. E. Schenck, of New Jersey, both spoke in strong terms of the importance of the operations of this Board as they had come under their own observations.

“The committee on the report of this Board presented the following resolutions, which were adopted.

“1. *Resolved*, That the Assembly are highly gratified at the wisdom and zeal with which the Board have prosecuted the business entrusted to them, and that gratitude is due to the great Head of the Church for the signal success which has crowned their efforts.

“2. *Resolved*, That the Assembly have established this Board for the purpose of supplying the Church and the world with a religious literature as far as practicable; that the Board have thus far met to a gratifying extent the expectations of the Assembly; and that the Synods, Presbyteries, and people, ought to give the preference to our own Board over any other institutions established for similar purposes.

“3. *Resolved*, That inasmuch as our ecclesiastical system furnishes an admirable instrumentality for efficiently carrying out the system of colportage now prosecuted by the Board of Publication, it is recommended to Synods or Presbyteries to appoint committees, whose duty it shall be to superintend their operations within their bounds.

“4. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly views with lively interest the evidences received through the Board of Publication, our corresponding brethren, and other sources, that an increased and increasing interest is manifested in the study of the Shorter Catechism.

“5. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Board of Publication to publish a richly illuminated copy of the Shorter Catechism, interspersed with interesting and instructive illustrations, adapted to the understanding and consciences of children and youth.

“6. *Resolved*, That the Assembly recommend to the Board of Publication to consider the propriety of publishing a monthly paper for Sabbath schools.”

Overture No. 3, On Church Members.

This was a memorial from the Second Presbytery of Phila-

delphia asking the General Assembly to take such action in the case of members of the church who remove, without certificate, or who fail, for a length of time, to attend upon the ordinances of the gospel, as will secure constitutional and uniform action throughout the Presbyterian churches.

“As there is no provision in our form of government, or discipline, to meet such cases, and as it would be inexpedient for the General Assembly to make a regulation on the subject, which would have the force of a constitutional rule, the Committee on Bills and Overtures recommended that the following be sent down to the presbyteries for their decision:

“Shall the form of government be amended by adding this clause at the end of chapter 9?

Sec. 6. “They shall also have power to remove from the list of communicants, those who by long continued absence, without a regular dismissal or other equivalent causes, are improper persons to be retained as members of the church.”

“Mr. Morris gave the reasons which had induced the Presbytery to which he belonged to ask this alteration. There are many members of churches out of reach of discipline, and absent for years, and their names ought not to be continued on the roll.

“Dr. Hoge said, that it is proposed now to do regularly, what has been done heretofore irregularly. It is simply to omit from the list of members the names of persons of whom the Church has no knowledge.

“Dr. R. J. Breckinridge contended that there is no use for such a power, and it is liable to unspeakable abuse. Pastors and elders should do their duty in keeping watch of the members. There may be churches, not well watched, where the thing has become an evil. But you will often find these absent ones re-appearing; and they will be greatly grieved to find their names stricken off. If you want to put an irresponsible power into the hands of the Session, so that they may turn members out when they will, without form of trial, pass this provision, and you will have it. It is a settled principle of our Church, that a man who has given himself to the Church has made an irrevocable covenant, and you are trenching upon some of the most fundamental principles, sanctified

by two or three centuries, when you propose to strip a man of his rights, and turn him out of the Church without trial. He besought his brethren to pause before taking any step toward such a measure as this; and to test the sense of the house again, he moved to lay the proposition on the table. Carried."

It seems to us that there is a wrong principle in this overture and in the answer which it was proposed should be given to it. There are two distinct theories respecting our ecclesiastical constitution. The one is that it is the grant of powers; the other is that it is a limitation of powers, i. e. a treaty entered into by primary church organizations as to the manner in which they shall exercise the powers inherent in them and derived from Christ. The latter is unquestionably the true view. A church session does not derive its power to admit members or exercise discipline from the constitution. The constitution simply states that such and such powers pertain to a church session; and the various church sessions embraced under the constitution agree to exercise those powers in a certain way. Neither does a presbytery derive from the constitution the right to ordain or to depose from the ministry. If independent it could exercise those rights at discretion; but when associated with other presbyteries interested in its acts, it stipulates that it will ordain only under such and such circumstances. The reason of this is obvious, a man ordained by one presbytery becomes, as a member of synod, a judge over the members of other presbyteries. They therefore, have a right to a voice in the matter. Hence all presbyteries thus associated enter into an agreement as to what qualifications they will demand in candidates for ordination, and in general as to the principles on which they will exercise their presbyterial powers. And such an agreement is their constitution. It is not therefore a grant of powers, but a stipulation between the associated presbyteries as to the manner in which they will exercise the powers inherent in them. It follows from this that a session or presbytery is simply bound by contract not to violate the constitution, but the exercise of its prerogatives is not circumscribed by that instrument. It can do what it pleases, as a church court, provided it infringes on no article of its contract with other

courts, and on no principle of the word of God. It has no need therefore to go to the General Assembly to ask power to do what from its very nature as a church court it has the right to do. A session must have a right to say who are the members of the church over which it presides. It might as well ask for power to erase from its roll the names of the dead, as to seek authority to say that those who have left them and wandered off no one knows where, have left them, and are no longer under their watch and care. The memorial, however, seems to assume that no session has any power in the premises but what it derives from the constitution; and the committee of Bills and Overtures proposed to add a section to that instrument to the effect that church sessions "shall have power to remove from the list of communicants those who from long absence," &c., as though such assumption were correct. According to our view the sessions have all the power they need in this matter inherent in themselves, and we therefore rejoice that the overture was rejected by the Assembly.

Complaint of the Rev. J. T. Smylie.

This was a complaint of the Rev. Mr. Smylie against the Synod of Mississippi. On the recommendation of the judicial committee the case being found in order, the usual mode of proceeding was adopted. This was an action in which a clergyman, the Rev. J. H. Van Court, had caused his slaves to cut sugar cane, on the plea of necessity, on the Sabbath. When arraigned for it informally in an interlocutory meeting of his presbytery, he expressed his sorrow that circumstances had rendered it necessary for him to act as he had done, and said he had no idea that the thing would ever occur again. The presbytery voted that this confession was satisfactory, and when the clerk made a record of the proceeding, the presbytery ordered it to be stricken out. Of this action Mr. Smylie complained to the synod. The synod allowed the presbytery to vote in the decision of the case, and sustained their action. Of this Mr. Smylie complained to the General Assembly.

Messrs. Beach, Mosely, Packard, Beatty and Templeton were heard in defence of the synod. They maintained that Mr. Van Court's confession was satisfactory; that the synod

had fully condemned cutting sugar cane on the Sabbath; that as there was no accuser in the case the presbytery was not bound to make a record of their action; and that, as it was not strictly a judicial case, the presbytery had a right to vote upon it when it came before the synod.

“The Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, appeared, at his request, in behalf of the complainant. He argued that both on account of the inadequacy of the confession, and the refusal to make a record, there was ground of complaint. Presbytery has a right to make a record or not, in an interlocutory meeting, but is responsible for the exercise of that discretion. They ought to make a record and keep it *in retentis*, that, if any one complains, the higher court may judge in the case.”

The roll was called for members to express their opinion, and the vote being taken, it appeared that 124 voted to sustain the complaint; 40 to sustain in part; and 4 not to sustain. A committee was appointed to draw up a minute expressive of the sense of the house in the case. That committee made the following report which was adopted, viz:

“1. That the decision of this Assembly in sustaining the complaint of Rev. Mr. Smylie against the Synod of Mississippi, is not to be regarded as deciding the merits of the original question; that is, the guilt or innocence of the individual in respect to whom this case originated.

“2. That the Presbytery of Louisiana should have recorded the results of the interlocutory meeting referred to in the complaint.

“3. That the Synod acted unconstitutionally, in permitting the Presbytery of Louisiana to vote on the adoption of the report of the Judicial Committee on the complaint of Mr. Smylie.

“4. That the Synod should have placed on its records the above mentioned reports.

“5. That the Presbytery of Louisiana erred in pleading the limitation of time for the non-compliance with the resolution of the Synod referring this whole case to them for a full investigation.

“6. That the case be remanded to the Presbytery of Louisiana, according to the resolution of the Synod, for such action as is demanded by the Book of Discipline.

“7. That the decision of the Assembly, together with the foregoing minute, be recorded in the minutes of the Synod of Mississippi, and of the Presbytery of Louisiana.”

Western Seminaries.

The public attention has of late been called to the subject of theological education in the west. Several prominent ministers of our church entertain the opinion that there should be but one theological seminary in that portion of the church, and that Cineinnati was the most eligible place for its location. In order to carry out these views, several meetings were held designed to favour the union of the two existing seminaries at Alleghany and New Albany, in a new institution to be established at Cineinnati. The result of these meetings, as we understand, was a decision to found a new seminary at Cineinnati, and to invite the other institutions to unite with the new enterprise on terms to be subsequently agreed upon. This gave rise to a protracted discussion, it being understood that the friends of the existing seminaries were opposed to the proposed union, and to the establishment of a new institution at Cineinnati. This subject was brought before the Assembly in two ways. First, by the report of the committee on the annual report of the seminary at Alleghany; and secondly, by overture. One of the resolutions recommended by the committee was the following, viz :

“That inasmuch as repeated movements and discussions have agitated the public mind, touching the permanency of the present location of this Institution and impressions unfavourable to the permanent prosperity of the Seminary cannot fail to result from the continuance of such proceedings, the General Assembly considers it timely and proper to say distinctly that it considers the present location of the Seminary in all respects as permanent as any acts of this body can make it; that it sees no reason to justify the further agitation of that question; and considering the past history and present condition of the Seminary, it knows of no ground on which the interposition of the General Assembly, for the removal of that Seminary from its present location, would be either just or politic.”

Dr. Hoge remarked in regard to this resolution "that he should be constrained to vote against it. It did not accord with his own views, and never did. He opposed the location of the Seminary at first, and had ever since been opposed to it, and might feel constrained at a proper time to enter his dissent from it in the resolution.

"Dr. Herron expressed great regret at hearing such an opposition from his venerable friend. He asked who located the Seminary? The General Assembly. Who had approved it at every stage of its progress, for the last twenty-two years, at each annual meeting? The General Assembly. The Assembly appointed the first Board of Directors and the first Professor. It was not an institution gotten up outside of the Presbyterian Church, and without authority. He then went into the history of the Assembly Seminary, and said scarcely anything had ever been given to it, except by the friends in its vicinity. He argued that the Assembly had no power to remove it, and he hoped they would not now repudiate all their former acts on this subject.

"Judge Fine said he was a member of the Assembly which located the Seminary at Alleghany. He thought at that time Cincinnati a better place than Pittsburgh; but, after hearing all the reasons, he came to the conclusion that Pittsburgh was a proper site, because around it they had all the materials for such an institution. But the question now is not location, but letting it remain after it has been located—not shall we build up, but shall we pull down. He thought it ought to remain, and that Cincinnati now was a proper site for another institution further west, and would raise both hands for one here, if the funds were offered us to found one.

"Dr. Hoge again explained that he did not propose a removal, nor had he ever done so. He never made opposition to it, but only to its location. He had assisted it in his feeble way, but did not now, nor did he ever favour its location.

"Dr. Herron expressed his gratification at his venerable friend's explanation of his position—perhaps he had stated his friend's position in rather too strong a light.

"Dr. R. J. Breckinridge said he hoped the resolution would

pass without serious opposition. The interests of the institution were seriously compromised by this constant agitation about its removal. Its immediate friends felt this. The committee were unanimous that it ought to cease. They had not introduced any extraneous questions into their resolutions, and he thought the Assembly ought to do all in its power to stop this agitation. They ought to say the question of location is settled. They now know nothing that can ever make it proper to break it up and remove it somewhere else. He was perfectly willing to take up the whole subject of Seminaries in the West and settle it; and he considered that the Assembly never could be in a better position to do so than now; but that question ought not to be mixed up with this one.

Mr. Brown, of Ohio, said he considered the resolution perfectly gratuitous. We, as an Assembly, had done nothing to indicate any desire to remove it. He should vote against it, though a friend of the Seminary.

Mr. Cleland, of Illinois, said he thought the Seminary properly located, but he could see no necessity for this resolution. It looked like going out of the house to hunt up business. The report of the committee is perfect without it. He therefore moved to strike out the 4th resolution from the report.

This motion was lost by a large majority.

Dr. Murray moved to lay the resolution on the table, as the subject would come up in another form. This motion prevailed.

When the subject was resumed, the Rev. Mr. Melvaine moved as a substitute for the resolution above mentioned, the following, viz: "That the Assembly regards the location of the Western Theological Seminary at Alleghany city as permanent, and all agitation of the subject of its removal [*now* or hereafter] as inexpedient and unjust." The words *now* or hereafter were on motion stricken out, and the substitute adopted: and then the whole report of which it formed a part was adopted without dissent.

The overture on this subject asked the Assembly to express its mind on the following subjects:

"That it has no direct control over the New Albany Semi-

nary, and will not interfere with the Synods which have established and are conducting it.

“That it regards the location of the Western Theological Seminary as finally settled, and will discountenance any scheme for its removal.

“That it does not approve the scheme to establish a third Theological Seminary at Cincinnati.

“Without expressing any opinion upon these propositions, the committee report the overture for the consideration of the Assembly.”

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge desired permission to offer the following resolution :

“*Resolved*, While the General Assembly regrets that any serious difference of opinion should exist in any part of the Church, in regard to any of the great movements for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world, and while it would willingly and gladly do all that may be proper, on its part, to compose and settle all such differences, it does not see its way clear, at the present time, to express any opinion in regard to the existing and contemplated Seminary west of Alleghany.”

This resolution after some discussion was adopted by a large majority.

Marriage of Christians with Heathen.

A memorial from the Presbytery of Ningpo, in China, asking for advice from this General Assembly on the subject of the marriage of professing Christians with the heathen. The committee recommend that it be answered as follows :

“In performing the work of missions among the heathen, many difficulties will arise which will require great wisdom and forbearance, and which only can be overcome by a wise application of scriptural rules. Of this kind are the cases respecting marriage, which will frequently occur so long as a great majority of the people are heathen. And this application of these rules must be made with a sound discretion, and be very much modified by particular circumstances.

“That the apostolical direction, ‘be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,’ is the advice of the Lord by the

apostle, and is to be observed carefully in all cases as far as practicable, is true. But, like other divine injunctions, it must be applied in all cases with due consideration of the circumstances. It is not, therefore, in the circumstances stated in the Overture, to be regarded as sinful universally and necessarily for a Christian to marry a heathen; nor is a Christian to be subjected to discipline on this account, unless the circumstances show criminality, and require the infliction of censures; of which circumstances the missionaries are the best judges."

When this report of the committee came up for consideration at a late hour in the sessions of the Assembly, a motion was made to refer the whole matter back to the presbytery of Ningpo, without an expression of opinion, or any judgment on the question presented. This motion was carried. The missionaries, therefore, are left to their own discretion in the premises. This perhaps is wise, though the answer proposed by the committee is probably as definite as the Assembly, under any circumstances, would have seen fit to give.

Ordination.

The Rev. Mr. Hughes, of the committee on the Minutes of the Synod of West Tennessee, recommended that the Records be approved, with the exception, that the Synod sanctioned the action of the Holstein Presbytery in ordaining a licentiate, when but two ministers were present. The Committee recommended that the Assembly express their strong disapprobation of this measure, and declare that the Synod should not have countenanced the proceedings of the Holstein Presbytery.

Mr. Walter Lowrie moved that the exception be stricken out from this Report.

Dr. William L. Breckinridge could not believe that any one could wish the General Assembly to give its sanction to a proceeding so irregular as this so-called ordination. On the subject of a quorum, our book is specific, and no matter for what reason the third minister withdrew, there was no presbytery when he was gone. He did not know whether any elders were present or not. He had said before that he would ~~as~~ leave be ordained by the Moderator and the elders present ~~as~~

any other way; but that is not the question. There were not the requisite number of ministers here to make a quorum, and therefore it was no presbytery. He solemnly protested against the Assembly giving its sanction to such a proceeding.

The Rev. Dr. Doak, (one of the fathers of Presbyterianism in the West,) remembered all the circumstances of this case. At that very session there was a quorum present, by whom all the trials and preliminary exercises were approved, and the candidate was actually on his knees, and the hands of the two ministers were on the candidate's head, when they discovered the third brother had absented himself. They consulted as to what should be done, and concluded that as every thing else had been done in so orderly a manner, the want of a third minister's hand was not indispensable, and they therefore proceeded to ordain him. It seems hard that one single member of a presbytery should arrest the proceedings of a presbytery in such solemn circumstances, and before a large congregation. They admitted there was the appearance of wrong. He did not know whether the third brother had gone out of the house or not.

Rev. Mr. Coe acquiesced in the views of Dr. Breckinridge, as to the necessity of a presbytery to ordain, but did not think the disorderly withdrawal of a brother should vitiate the whole proceedings.

Rev. Mr. Dickey contended that the absence of this member did not vitiate this ordination. It was not necessary that every member present should lay on his hands, and the fact that this brother did not lay on his hands did not withdraw his consent. All the preliminary proceedings had been regular.

The Moderator stated the question was simply whether ordination could be performed by less than three ministers or not.

Mr. Lowrie said that was not the question, but that the question was whether the Assembly should approve the proceedings of the Synod, which, while they allowed the ordination to stand, censured the irregularity.

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge said, in his view the error lay in the

statement that the third member was not present. One of the ministers had here stated that he did not know whether he was in the house or not. All the proceedings had been regular up to the point of laying on hands, and then because this member did not come forward and lay on his hands, they presumed he was not there, whereas he was ecclesiastically present.

According to any understanding Dr. Breckinridge had as to the ordination of ministers, it was very hard to say out of the Bible, that two ministers or two elders might not ordain Presbyterially. Our doctrine was simply *plurality*. It would not be a *regular* Presbyterian ordination where three ministers were not present, but it would be *valid* where there was plurality. He had once gone to Princeton to ask Dr. Miller where the idea of "three" came from, and he said it was impossible for him to tell. Suppose an Episcopal minister were to come to us, would we not acknowledge his ordination, though it was done by one man? In his judgment, two Presbyterian ministers and seven elders (as in this case were present) were equal to an Episcopal Bishop! He thought they might just as well have objected to this ordination because those seven elders did not lay their hands on.

This man, moreover, was within, he might say, the almost imperceptible proximity to ordination, and no one could say exactly at what point that act would not be consummated. Under such circumstances, he would not be for uprooting serious matters for such minute points. The Synod did just what was right.

Dr. William L. Breckinridge regretted to appear again, especially in opposition to his brother, for whose opinions he had so much respect. The more ingeniously you maintain that this man came within *a line* of ordination, the more clearly you show that the thing was not actually done. As to whether the third member took himself off, we cannot go behind the record, which declares that he was not there. On this the whole question turned. The question is not whether we would receive a minister ordained in another Church, but whether a Presbytery can be constituted without "three ministers."

Rev. Dr. Murray said, the question is a very simple one

between irregularity and invalidity. The ordination here is irregular, as the Synod state; but they refuse to say that the ordination was invalid, and this the committee wish the Assembly to censure. He was persuaded the Assembly would not concur in this censure, and thereby pronounce this ordination invalid.

Rev. Mr. Hays concurred with Dr. Murray.

Rev. Mr. Clarke could not agree that the whole of this irregularity consisted in the absence of the third minister. There was a Presbytery, and the hands of three ministers were not indispensable to ordination.

Dr. Murray took the chair, and

Rev. Dr. Leland said that a quorum of a Presbytery required the presence of three ministers; and as soon as either of these withdrew, that ceased to be a Presbytery. Up to a certain point, there was a presbytery here; but when the highest act of an ecclesiastical body was to be done, it was found that one member had withdrawn. There was then no Presbytery and the ordination was consequently invalid. Installation can be performed by a committee of two ministers, but the power of ordination cannot be delegated.

Rev. Mr. Hodgeman contended for the validity of the ordination.

Rev. Dr. Hoge said this may seem to some a trivial matter, but it involves a great principle. To declare an act of this nature invalid involves very serious consequences. This person has been ministering to a congregation from that day to this. He has discharged all the functions of a minister. Will this Assembly, without imperative reasons, declare all this invalid? He would not, for one, unless under something that could be shown to be biblical authority. All preliminary proceedings were entirely regular. If there is any defect in this case it is of form and not of substance. The setting apart in ordination is the form, the governmental act whereby he was essentially made a minister, was done in full Presbytery; and in full Presbytery the public act was ordered to be performed, and two of their number ordered to perform it. This then they had a right to do. We should consider the difference as to the nature of ordination and installation. Both are de-

clarative, and not governmental acts; and if installation is valid when performed by two ministers, so also is ordination.

Rev. Dr. Rice. The Presbyterian Church is regulated by the Bible, as the great and highest resort, and the Confession of Faith as its exponent. Whilst the Confession of Faith requires three ministers in order to ordination, it no where declares that without three, there can be no ordination. Nor does the Bible any where specify "three" as the number necessary to ordain. It simply requires plurality. When we wish to determine what is regular, we go to our Form of Government; if to ascertain what is valid, we resort to the Bible. If two ministers are present, we cannot say that the Bible does not sanction the ordination. The number specified in our book is merely for prudential reasons.

Rev. Mr. Lloyd said, that in Western New York, where he lived, their Synods had been disowned because of irregularity: he would have the Assembly consistent, and censure irregularity here. There was no presbytery when this act was done, and it should not be sanctioned.

The exceptions in the report were stricken out, and the synod was not censured for approving the conduct of the presbytery in this ordination.

In this decision we presume the great body of the Church will concur. As the brethren, whose remarks are quoted above, state, there is the greatest possible difference between irregular and invalid. Rules are laid down for security and to be faithfully observed in ordinary circumstances. But the neglect or violation of the rules prescribing how a thing ought to be done, does not vitiate the thing done. In many countries and churches there are rules regulating the celebration of marriage, but how monstrous would it be that the disregard of such municipal regulations should make the marriage void. That this is sometimes done, as in Great Britain, is justly regarded as a grievous injustice. Some years ago it was decided that a marriage in Ireland solemnized by a presbyterian minister, where one of the parties was an Episcopalian, was no marriage. It would be a decision of like though of less enormity, to affirm that an ordination by less than three ministers was no ordination. As Dr. R. J. Breckinridge well remarked, we recognis

the validity of orders in the Episcopal church, and all classes of Presbyterians have always done so, with what consistency then can we maintain that three or even a plurality of ordainers is absolutely necessary? A plurality may be desirable in all possible cases; the precise number three may be the safest minimum that could be fixed on as the general rule, but there is nothing in the nature of ordination, and nothing in the laws of Christ which makes that number essential. We have derived the rule from the old canon law, as laid down in the earliest councils of the Christian church, which required the co-operation of three bishops in the ordination or consecration of another bishop. This became the universal law of the church, and of all churches, and was from its obvious wisdom adopted by the different classes of Protestants at the reformation. But it has ever been regarded as a prudential municipal arrangement, necessary to the safety of the church but not to the validity of the service. In our own church the same principle has been acted on. In the early part of our history it was customary to ordain by a committee of presbytery as well as by the presbytery itself. The Rev. Dr. Leland indeed, is reported to have said, "Installation can be performed by a committee of two ministers, but the power of ordination cannot be delegated." If this means simply that under our present constitution such is the rule, it may be correct. But if, as we suppose was intended, the sentence quoted means that according to the principles of presbyterianism "the power of ordination cannot be delegated," it is obviously contradicted by the practice of our own church, by the express enactments of the Westminster Directory, and the history of the church, in all its presbyterian branches.

The fact that a single minister ordains elders not merely in the midst of his session, or parochial presbytery, but when acting as an evangelist and organizing churches, shows, at least to those who make ruling elders to be bishops, that according even to our present constitution a single bishop may ordain others to the episcopate. This, however, is not our argument. The real question is what is ordination, and what is essential to the transmission of the ministerial office. All admit that under our constitution, which accords in this mat-

ter with the general law of the church, three ministers should be present and co-operate in the ordination services. Any departure from this rule is an irregularity, to be justified only in cases of emergency. But the departure, even when not justifiable, is to be censured as disorderly, but not considered as rendering the ordination void.

Question of Privilege.

“ Judge Leavitt stated that the Rev. A. Swaney, Commissioner from the Presbytery of Steubenville, had gone home on account of sickness in his family, and that the Rev. Dr. Beattie, his alternate, being now present, he moved that Dr. Beattie take the vacant seat.

“ Dr. W. L. Breckinridge asked if the Assembly had not decided against this practice in years past.

“ Dr. Hoge cited one case, and the Moderator read another from the minutes, where the alternate had first taken his seat, and on the arrival of the principal had vacated it in his favour.

“ Dr. R. J. Breckinridge argued that it was contrary to the established order of the Church, and dangerous in its operations. He denied the relevancy of the cases cited, and resisted the present application.

“ Judge Leavitt stated that there was no collusion here between the principal and his alternate; the former had been called home by sickness in his family, and the latter happened to be here, without the least idea of taking his seat. But the presbytery had rights, and if the alternate is here in the absence of the principal he may claim the seat.

“ The House so decided and Dr. Beattie was admitted.”

It used to be a very common thing for the principal to give up his seat to his alternate. But as this was seen to give a very great advantage to the presbyteries near the place of the Assembly's meeting, the rule was adopted of refusing to allow the alternate to take the place of his principal. And that rule has been generally adhered to. Since the Assembly has adopted the plan of changing yearly its place of meeting, the reason for the rule is less stringent than it was.